

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED RATIONALIST MONTHLY



The following principles identify SMCs

The mission of an SMC:

- To inform public debate and discussion on the major issues of the day by reflecting based science into headline news.

THOUGHT, December 1977). The glaring fact that there is a dearth of rationalist literature having mass appeal is really alarming. At this juncture I strongly feel that IRA should accept with gratitude the noble gesture of David Josephy in offering the copyright of his novel free of cost, and should take up the task of translating it into different languages.

Like novel, drama is also a powerful medium. But, to our disappointment and dismay we have not so far made any attempt to exploit the stage to propagate the rationalist views. This arena has also an equal effect, if not more, like the performance of hypnosis and magic associated with the Divine Exposure Campaign. The stage should be effectively made use of to annihilate the social evils — age-old superstitions, blind beliefs, exploitation of the common people by the so-called Godmen, untouchability and casteism. The Rationalists-Dramatists must ponder over the matter and sincerely try to fill the present void in this sphere of the rationalist movement.

K. P. V. Panicker, Rourkela.



NAMES

Sir,

We have been having the opportunity of reading your issues of FREETHOUGHT. It is not the role of an SMC to promote or issues, such as nuclear power or genetically modified organisms;

- We recommend that all SMCs have either:

(1) a capped funding arrangement whereby no donor can fund the centre more than 10% of its operating budget. This not only ensures that no one donor can dominate and set the agenda for the centre, it also provides a buffer so that a donor that is unhappy with the work of the centre can leave without it impacting on its financial survival; or

(2) a legally binding agreement between the centre and its host institution that ensures independent governance. If the capped funding model is not followed, the onus is on the centre to show that it can work completely independent of funding sources. A constitution that ensures the centre's independence is essential.

ment whether or not change of names would be useful. So-called god's names were given by men!

—Editor.)



GARLANDS IN MARRIAGES

Sir,

The news of one more rationalist marriage appeared in December '77 FREETHOUGHT. Garland wearing more or less is an age-old custom. The Hindu marriage comes to a climax with the exchange of garlands. Touring VIPs are offered garlands which are removed immediately and thrown aside. The life of flowers in a garland is only a few hours if not a few minutes. It is an unnecessary expenditure

Some sections of rationalists advocate and practise use of vegetable or khadi garlands. Here again content is the same.

May I appeal to all readers to consider discouraging this wasteful habit?

C. Chandrasekar, Krishna, A.P.



**WHITHER NATUROPATHY,
URINE THERAPY?**

Sir,

On December 14, 1977 Mrs. Gajaraben Desai, wife of the Prime Minister was

admitted to a hospital in New Delhi.

It was reported that she was suffering from

urine therapy.

It was also reported that she was

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

"That which is incapable of proof it self is no proof of anything else"

P. B. Shelly (1792-1822)

Vol. VIII April, 1978. No. 4

Freethought

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OBJECTS OF CASTEISM

We have had occasions in the past to refer to casteism the pernicious offspring of religion. We are compelled to revert to it once again what with the processions of and fights between reservationists and anti-reservationists and with statues practising casteism.

The 'Reservationists' are fighting for their survival. The exploited classes wish to liberate themselves from the clutches of the exploiters. In the name of caste and 'intellectual' superiority, the exploiting castes have been occupying positions of wealth, power and influence. They are so confident now of official patronage that they protest against the bare essentials available to some of the oppressed castes.

The rich are as usual behind this. Not that affluent ones have sympathy for the poorer people in their caste group. What they wish to have is a regular flow of middle class workers (with class attitudes similar to themselves) so that the oppressed castes (which are almost synonymous with classes) could be treated in the same old contemptuous manner. This is sought to be achieved by setting the second (middle) class against the third (oppressed) thus side-tracking the main issue of exploitation by the privileged few. Little perceiving this strategy, the two exploited classes fight between themselves. Until we realise this, the intermediate class (whether they are in police, govt. private industry or agriculture) will unwittingly be a tool of the rich with which to beat the most exploited classes. The so-called middle classes, awake! You have nothing to lose but the crumbs thrown at you by the rich. You will have to herald the change, if you are not to be adjudged intellectual cowards by posterity.

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EDITOR:
C. A. SESHADRI



India - China ties getting strong

Prof. A. M. DHARMALINGAM

The visit to Bangalore of the Chinese Goodwill Delegation on 15th and 16th March 1978 has been a landmark in the history of Karnataka in as much as contact has been established between the peoples of China and India. The most conspicuous element in the Bangalore visit is the Karnataka Rationalist Association felicitating the Chinese as fellow rationalists. The delegation had a tumultuous reception at the airport though marred by the violent demonstration of the Tibetan refugees, who misused the sympathy and help showered on them by the Indian people and Government.

FELLOW RATIONALISTS

The President of the Karnataka Rationalist Association, in his felicitations described the Chinese as fellow rationalists. In accordance with the rationalist principles, the Chinese have discarded all ancient scriptures and authorities to build the revolutionary atheist and communist state.

Praising the inimitable leadership of Chairman Mao, he recalled Mao's saying in May 1955, 'Idealism and metaphysics are the easiest things in the world because people can talk as much nonsense as they like without basing it on objective reality.'

He pointed out that India which obtained freedom from British imperialism, is yet to attain freedom from religion, caste and superstition. He said that class struggle is impossible in India since caste consciousness of the upper castes neutralises class consciousness to make all revolutions null and void. Hence it is that the attack of the

rationalists is primarily on caste and the Hindu religion that wholly rests for its survival on caste hierarchy.

Mrs. Wang, the Deputy leader of the Delegation, thanked the rationalists and other friends of India for the sincere greetings offered to the Chinese and promised all help and co-operation in furthering the friendly ties between China and India. She acknowledged the mutual ties existing between India and China for over two thousand years.

The Dalit Action Committee of Karnataka that represents the oppressed classes, also presented a welcome address to the Chinese Delegation and told them about the woes and wails of the most oppressed people of the world.

Earlier on 15th March, the India-China Friendship Association felicitated the Delegation and eulogised the epic strides made by the Chinese Revolution in transforming China into a welfare state through socialist reconstructions. Mr. V. T. Rajasekhara Shetty, Convenor of the Friendship Association in Karnataka, regretted that India is yet to demolish its feudal institutions and casteist thought structures. The unique caste system based on ruthless exploitation and perpetual inequality, it was stated, has kept a mass of humanity under the worst form of apartheid.

Mr. B. Basavalingappa, Minister for Revenue in the Government of Karnataka, who presided over the meeting, praised the victory of the Chinese people as a rare example of the oppressed people obtaining their freedom after tremendous sacrifice and raising a noble structure of freedom and development on the ashes of the past. He described the visit of the Delegation as a step in the right direction.

Maniammai is no more

S. L. Bharati

We were shocked to learn about the sudden death of Mrs. Maniammai, the President of the Dravida Kazhagam on 16-3-78 due to a heart attack. After the death of Periyar the mantle of carrying on the movement and his great mission fell on her. We had then hopes, as I expressed in the eighth convention of I.R.A. at Madras in 1974 that she would devise ways and means to consolidate all the available forces of rationalism and steadily pursue the objectives unperturbed by the rising tides of religious fanfare and political fire works.

RAVANA LILA

At that time we had the opportunity to witness the mammoth demonstration of burning the effigies of Rama and his cohorts in Periyar Thidal conducted by her, challenging the annual celebrations of burning the effigies of Ravana and his cohorts at Ram Lila grounds in Delhi under the auspices of the President and Prime Minister of India. It was the height of folly for the D.M.K. government to have launched a prosecution against Maniammai and others either under pressure from the Centre or anxiety to please

AN APOLOGY

Due to unavoidable reasons this issue is also badly delayed. The last date for receipt of entries for Test for Reason No.7 is therefore extended to 5-5-78. The inconvenience is regretted.

—Editor

the Prime Minister. Though she and others were convicted at first, they were acquitted on appeal.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH PERIYAR, E. V. R.

Maniammai was born on 10-2-1917 in Vellore and educated up to S.S.L.C. course. Attracted by the selfless work of Periyar she became closely associated with him. After the death of Nagammal, his first wife, there was no one to look after him. He had a hectic life in and out of jail rousing people against caste and religion. Maniammai took upon herself the arduous task of attending to his personal needs and comforts. This ripened into an inseparable companionship and resulted in a registered marriage in 1949. Arignar Anna and his group of young followers made it an occasion of protest. They separated and formed the D.M.K. party,

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entered politics and won support. They captured power in 1967.

PRIESTS FROM 'UNTOUCHABLES'

Political power in the case of D.M.K. and jealous affluence in the case of D.K. becoming close allies led to splits in both the camps after the death of Arignar Anna and Periyar. In spite of her declining health and anxieties, she stood steadfast in running the institutions and continuing the militant campaigns to promote the objectives of the movement. Though the D.M.K. in power passed the Archaka Act enabling the 'untouchables' to become trained priests, the validity of the Act was challenged. It was upheld in the Supreme Court, but the observations of one of the Brahmin judges (that the provisions of the Act should be implemented in accordance with Agamic rules) gave an excuse to the State Government to cold shoulder the reform by throwing the blame on the Central Govt. for not securing constitutional guarantees. This drove Maniammai to picket the post offices.

DURING EMERGENCY

MISA was availed of to round up many persons indiscriminately in the Dravida Kazhagam. Even the celebration of Periyar's birthday within the closed campus of Periyar Thidal was banned by the Adviser's regime and Maniammai was arrested and kept in prison as a (C) class prisoner for two days. When she came to Madras from Tiruchy to participate in the black flag demonstration against Indira Gandhi, she was again arrested. She had to be sent to the General Hospital on account of her ailing condition.

Now that she is dead, both the Chief Minister and the leader of the opposition pay homage to her and shed tears! Are they crocodile tears? The people wonder. Not only the rationalists but also others irrespective of their beliefs and ideals come forward to pay their tributes to Maniammai who devoted herself to the ideals and causes to which she became wedded until the last moments of her life. We trust that Mr. K. Veeramani who has succeeded her, now as the General Secretary of the D.K. will not spare himself in promoting the cause of Social Revolution.

WHO IS TO SAVE WHOM ??? !!!



Tal Brooke's Two Years with Sai Baba

By

Dr. ABRAHAM T. KOVOOR



In the nineteen-sixties there emerged in the West, particularly in the USA, a generation of youths who launched a counter culture. They rebelled against the life-style of modern bourgeois society, rejected the philosophy and ethics of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Many of them turned to the East and searched for an alternative in Eastern cults and mysticism. One such explorer after the "truth" was Tal Brooke, son of a US diplomat.

While in Colombo a few months ago Tal Brooke recounted the highlights of his experiences with the cults to Mr. Jayantha Somasundaram, member of the Sri Lanka Rationalist Association, and director of South Asian Media Centre. His story goes thus :—

" My involvement with the cults began at a very early stage. We were in Haiti at that time, and our maid had a brother who was a voodoo priest, and so I came under the influence of the occult! My parents had no religious background at all. As years went by I gravitated towards the morbid. I had obsession with death, and I used to walk through cemeteries. By the time I was ten I had my first Ouija Board to converse with spirits.

UPANISHADS AND LSD

" In my teens I got into psychic stuff. I had a friend who was clairvoyant. Another friend had out-of-the-body experiences. When I went to University there was occurring the psychedelic explosion in the USA under the influence of Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert. Occult experiences were now made possible through recourse to LSD. This was the same chemical that goes to make up Soma under the influence of which people had written the Upanishads in ancient India. Eastern mysticism was responsible for the spiritual renaissance in the USA in the sixties.

" In 1965 I quit University, read up and I became a disciple of Swami Ramakrishna. The next year upon a mountain top in Virginia I took a massive dose of LSD. It was a profound, devastating experience that paralleled the experiences of Yogananda, Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo and Maharishi Yogi. I was convinced that I had been elevated to the level of the rishis of the vedas, and become one with the universe.

"I believed in the concept of God within and that all religions were one. I had a tremendous dream to synthesise all religions and find the perfect guru.

CLOSEST TO SAI BABA

"So I sold everything and came to India. In India I went from one guru to another becoming progressively disillusioned. I saw no cosmic bliss, but rather a country in darkness. I was with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Ramakrishna Swamis and Krishnamurti. But the one who convinced me that he was a God was Satya Sai Baba whom I met in 1970. I was to become his disciple for two years".

"Sai Baba seemed to know me, seemed to be waiting for me. He selected me, gave me private interviews. He did a number of miracles before me. I was spiritually seduced. I was easily the Westerner closest to him".

Tal Brooke's search for the 'truth' appeared to have reached its climax when he encountered Bhagawan Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparti. This meeting occurred at a time when Tal was at the end of his tether, depressed after being robbed, disillusioned and exhausted after an extensive tour of the sub-continent in search of a true Guru.

Baba was the most magnetic being Tal had ever seen. He appeared to be the walking doorway into the absolute—the meeting point with the god head.

FAITH GREW

From the beginning Baba drew out Tal Brooke from among the hundreds of devotees who pressed around him for attention. At Baba's feet Tal heard once again the pantheism that he subscribed to: "God is like a big ocean, all one....."

Baba could discern the restlessness in Tal's mind. He identified the "confusion, the thirst for God and Love. "I know your whole past", Baba would say. "I am truth, goodness and beauty....."

Tal was to become a disciple of Baba at Prasanthi Nilayam. Here he was to emerge as the leader of the group of western devotees, all of whom had dropped out of the mainstream of life and come to India, often being guided to Sai Baba's ashram. In time he was to become the Westerner with the greatest access to Sai Baba. A position of trust he lapped up.

Tal's faith in Baba grew. "I want to love you with all my heart, soul and mind Baba, I want your will to be mine. I know you are God....."

"Baba told me that my drug experience in Virginia was just a taste of cosmic bliss and he could give it to me for eternity. It was tremendous drama. While I was with Baba I was irradiated by his presence and

He Let Himself Down

British clairvoyant Simon Alexander had built himself quite a reputation. Now, however, people will probably be more wary about believing his predictions, for he has failed to foresee his own bankruptcy. "If I look into the future I see only what I want to see," he is reported to have said ruefully. "No one wants to see the problems facing him".

Courtesy: ("New Times")

EUTHANASIA

Dr M. Alimurung of the Philippines attending the International Federation of Catholic Medical Association which met in Bombay in January was quoted in "The Times of India" of February 2nd as saying:

"The doctor who practises euthanasia is playing God, a modern attitude that is no longer an unbelievable phenomenon."

"Even in cases declared hopeless by medical experts, where death is inevitable, euthanasia is out of the question, as no man has the right to decide when another's life should end. The medical principle in these cases is fairly clear."

The religious and medical principle is clear, but what of the humanitarian principle? Or could it be that religion and medicine are not concerned with humanitarianism?

It seems pertinent to quote Bertrand Russell on the subject:

felt this other force taking hold of me--a non-human force. But underneath I was a tormented human being. Part of me was dying and that was a sad experience. I sensed that something terrible was going to happen.

SAI BABA LYING

"By now I had caught Sai Baba lying. I saw how he pandered to the rich".

Tal began work on a book dealing with the life and work of Sai Baba. He was nearing the completion of this book when things began to change. First of all, most of the other Westerner lost faith in Baba and left the Ashram.

HOMO-SEXUAL

Finally Tal's eyes opened—he stumbled onto the best-kept secrets about Sai Baba, the fact that he is a hermaphrodite. "On two occasions

"The whole conception of sin is one I find very puzzling, doubtless owing to my sinful nature. If sin consisted in causing needless suffering, I should understand; but on the contrary, sin often consists in avoiding needless suffering. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, the English official expert on sin, explained how erroneous the view that a patient's consent be taken in the case of mercy killing. This would turn euthanasia into suicide—and suicide is sin"

"So to please the Church and God victims of cancer still have to endure months of wholly useless agony, unless their doctors or nurses are sufficiently courageous to risk the charge of murder. I find difficulty in the conception of a God who gets pleasure from contemplating such tortures, and if there were a God capable of such wanton cruelty, I should certainly not think Him worthy of worship. But that only proves how sunk I am in moral depravity!"

Sai Baba attempted to be intimate with me. Tal's blind faith was also shattered when he discovered that Baba had homosexual relationship with most of his Western disciples. The experience of an Anglo-Indian boy who was seduced by Baba was the final proof of his immorality.

Tal was now confronted with the major crisis of his life. In trauma his past unfolded before him. Finally he left the shores o' India disillusioned, to join the mainstream, and to accept "Christ as the True Lord". In Delhi he spent his last week in India at the Peace Corp Hostel, giving lectures on Eastern mysticism and its perils.

"Before leaving Puttaparti I decided to confront Baba during the Guru Purnima festival. As Baba walked by me I attempted to rip open his robe and expose him, but failed." △

I Protest!

by

Margaret Bhatty

I was surprised to see that the January number of *FREETHOUGHT* has my article on "Women and Rationalism" put under the heading of "Eve's Corner." Both terms are unfortunate: *Eve* projects a derisive stereotype of women in general; and *Corner* suggests exclusiveness and separateness. Neither concepts really have any place in rationalism.

To be described as "a true daughter of Eve" is no compliment, for down through the ages this sad creature has had so much calumny, vileness and viciousness attributed to her that it is difficult to believe she was after all a mythical creature, a figment of man's own imagination.

ORIGIN OF EVE

Her name is derived from the Hebrew hawa meaning "life-giving," but according to Christian dogma she it was who brought death into the world by causing Adam to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge—the only commendable thing Adam ever did. Eve is an incidental creature, a secondary thing, derived from someone infinitely more superior—Adam the Man. But even as the Mother of Mankind one cannot take Eve seriously. Who can take seriously a person fashioned like a chop from a mere rib.

“ It is not true that woman was made from man’s rib,” wrote James Barrie. “ She was made from his funny bone. ”

NO OBJECTS OF DERISION

This has made Eve and all her daughters objects of derision. Nietzsche wrote: "God-created woman. In the act he brought boredom to an end—and also many other things. Woman was the second mistake of God."

"The Bible says that woman was the last thing God made," wrote Dumas. "Evidently he made her on Saturday night. She reveals His fatigue."

But to the Fathers of the early Christian church she was no joking matter and created theological difficulties for them and God, too. Having disobeyed God she was cursed by Him : " I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee, "

ANAESTHETICS DENIED

This was the beginning of the long history of the subjugation of women in Christianity by which she was denied her rights as a human being since she was accused of God. When anaesthetics were discovered for many years they were denied to women in childbirth in the belief that it would displease God to have His curse from Genesis reversed.

LUTHER AND EX-NUN

His condemnation of Eve's daughters was reaffirmed through the ages by other celibates like Paul the Apostle, various Fathers of the early Church and Popes down to modern times. Martin Luther, who did not practise celibacy but "lived in sin" with an ex-nun, nevertheless regarded women with odium. "Never any good came of female domination," he said. "God created Adam Master and Lord of living creatures, but Eve spoilt it all."

Early Christian dogma ascribed to her all the torments of the world because she was responsible for the Fall of Adam from grace. And since she had used her wiles to make Adam sin she became the mainspring of all

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evil and wickedness. In a religion that held the flesh as corrupt and sexual intercourse an impurity women naturally appeared as the Devil's most fearsome temptation.

WOMAN A HARMFUL BEAST ?

“ Adam was led to sin by Eve and not Eve by Adam, ” wrote St. Ambrose. “ It is just and right that woman accept as lord and master him whom she led unto sin. ” While St. John Chrysostom declared : “ Among all savage beasts none is found so harmful as woman. ”

Having brought into the world the taint of Original Sin, Eve caused Christian theologians some headaches. To ensure that Mary the Mother of Jesus be without the taint of this particular sin, they had to think up the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. And since by eating the apple she brought death into the world God was obliged to send his only Son to die most cruelly on the cross to redeem mankind.

LIN YUTANG

Dr. Lin Yutang, the well known bilingual scholar and anthologist of Chinese and Indian literature came from a devout Christian family. His father was a pastor and he himself studied theology until contradictions in it so disillusioned him that he left the religion and preferred to call himself a “ pagan ” thereafter though still retaining his belief in God. He has written of the two great contradictions which bothered him in his book.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING :

“ The first was that theologians had made the entire structure of Christian belief hang upon the existence of an apple. If Adam had not eaten an apple, there would be no original sin, there would be no need for redemption. ”

“ Still more preposterous another proposition seemed to me. This was the argument that when Adam and Eve ate an apple during their honeymoon, God was so angry that He condemned their posterity to suffer from generation to generation for that little offence but that, when that same posterity murdered the same God's only Son, God was so delighted that He forgave them all. ”

But He never forgave Eve and her descendants—Christian theologians saw to that. So you see, Mr. Editor, how unfortunate a term is the name Eve. Which woman really wants to be in her Corner? I suggest you think up some other title for this section; but what it should be I have no idea whatsoever. That's your headache !

(In view of Ms. M. Bhatty's cogent, persuasive and telling arguments, we discontinue reserving any 'corner' for women. Of course, we will continue to publish articles on women aimed at removing the superstition relating to 'sex' - Ed) △

Good Luck Fenced off

The authorities of Penang (Malaysia) have resorted to an unusual way to protect the statue of Capt. F. Francis Light, the British seafarer who founded the city in the 18th century. They have put a fence around it because people have been flocking to the foot of the bronze image praying for a winning lottery ticket. It all started with a rumour that those who pray before the statue with lighted candles, joss sticks and other offerings and then rush off to buy a lottery ticket will have good luck. As a result, the monument's base became so caked with wax and littered with rubbish that the authorities decided on a radical measure and put up the fence to protect the statue.

IS PRAYER EFFICACIOUS?

PROF. A. M. Dharmalingam

MONKEY AND RAT GODS: Miracles seen in such accidents or events of one monkey retreating before a praying woman after it had its play, as against hundreds of others where prayers have yielded no results, are responsible for the peculiar Indian phenomenon of treating monkeys and rats in veneration. In spite of all the prayers of Hindus, the fact is, monkeys and rats in India destroy one fourth of food grains growing and grown, with the result that this godly country has to import millions of tons of food grains from other countries. On one occasion, an American reporter commented that it is illogical for America to supply food to a country that worships (instead of destroying) monkeys that destroy so much food. If pests, locusts, bugs and mosquitoes can be destroyed, what is the sanctity about monkeys and rats that are just other types of killers?

PETITIONING PRAYER: The petitioning prayer to obtain benefits on easy terms is an utter failure. This type presumes the existence of a personal being who can hear the petitions, weigh them against the individual's background and grant the request through an agency. Both the assumptions are absurd, for they are opposed to the facts of life. Prayer can never alter the operation of natural laws. Prayer is manifestation of faith. The more unintelligent the faith, the more fervent is the prayer and the ritual.

GODLESS RUSSIA AND CHINA: If prayer has any efficacy and its absence a danger, Russians and Chinese must be starving, preyed by wild beasts, worried by monkeys and rats, killed by epidemics and fleeced by priests, black-marketeers and smugglers. On the contrary, the population of these godless and prayerless countries are growing, production multiplying, the average age going beyond 60 and most citizens fed and housed properly. By a ruthless national campaign against monkeys and rats, China practically liquidated them and yet no miracle happened there even to save the Hanumans and Mooshigavagans of those countries.

No prayer for material benefits has ever been answered. Millions of wives and mothers have prayed for the safe return of their kin from war, but whole armies have perished. When a plane with a hundred passengers begins to wobble or dive and the call is given to tie the belt, every passenger, perhaps, will pray, but the mechanical defect crashes the plane causing the death of all. If accidentally five are saved, the papers report "five people escaped miraculously", and omit to say that the rest died miraculously, and the five that escaped may be the worst of the lot. When thousands of people are threatened by floods or fire, earthquake or epidemic, almost everyone prays in vain.

UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS PRAY: Science has destroyed the credulity which made prayer a form of devotion. It is not disputed that there are many things in nature not seen by the naked eye, but evident by their effects. Petition prayer is not one such. Prayer itself is valueless even as a spiritual exercise to obtain even better conduct, for we know that every black-marketeer, smuggler, hoarder, drunkard, thief and corrupt official starts and ends his day's sinister work with prayer. These people seem to actually depend on prayer and worship for success in their nefarious activities. Limited to contemplation and meditation on good things for one's own life, prayer may yet be uncertainly useful, but certainly not to evoke responses from the external animate or inanimate, human or beast. △

Woman Must Sin to be Free!

by

Margaret Bhatty

Woman's physiological destiny is maternity for the perpetuation of the species. This holds true throughout nature. But human society alone has never conformed entirely to Nature and today woman is demanding a redefinition of herself. One of the misconceptions derived from the biological aspect of woman has particularly served in subjugating her through the myth that she yearns for maternity and unless she achieves it she feels incomplete. This is a fallacy. It is in fact a masculine definition of women.

No yearning for maternity

I know many women, educated and uneducated, who hated having children and who, given the choice, would not have taken on maternity. This subconscious rejection of their supposed biological destiny has given rise to feelings of guilt, resulting in resentment being turned upon their children causing them irreparable damage in their formative years.

All women are not suited to motherhood. Neither do all women desire it. Contraception and abortion offer them a way out. But here religion interposes. Because the right to decide whether or not she will burden herself with unwanted maternity gives woman a right to control her body, orthodox opinion opposes contraception. In that right she herself finds a new definition of her sexuality. It is in fact her first step towards real emancipation—her first step towards personhood.

Hold on women

Why has the Catholic Church stubbornly resisted any measures which might help women to reject their biological destiny? Because it is through women that the Church

hopes to retain its hold on the family, and through the family on the community as a whole. This it achieves by cultivating in women a right and proper abhorrence of sin in any guise. Religion in women is identified with virtue. This is why in areas where women have gained most freedom, atheism has played a conspicuous role. As Russel noted: "It is only with the decay of the notion of sin in modern times that women have begun to gain their freedom."

"The Times of India" reporting on the proceedings of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations which met in Bombay in the end of January, quoted a certain Dr. M. Alimurung of the Philippines as saying: "The so-called scientific and safe abortions and artificial contraceptives to control population growth are not courageous reforms of our age but merely bad solutions

"A community that wishes to solve academic, social and human conflicts by killing unborn life does not deserve to be called a social and human community."

Concern for foetal soul

The Catholic Church's concern for the foetal soul is indeed touching. It is a pity that this concern was not extended to solving its own "academic, social and human conflicts" during the past. What of the many who dared to differ with it and had to be hanged, quartered, and burnt at the stake to bring them to their senses? What of the social conflicts with Protestant groups which resulted in wholesale massacres in Europe and England? And what of the many infidels who had to be exterminated in the Crusades to win back Jerusalem from them? The list is by no means complete as, anyone knows

who has read accounts of the discovery of the New World and the establishing of catholic empires in Asia and Africa.

The FIAMC congress must find the present climate of opinion quite congenial at this time on matters regarding contraception and abortion, because the Janata leaders' own attitude to the interests of women is as ambivalent as the Church's own

Raj Narain's Abhimanyu

Raj Narain (celibate-like God, the Pope and the Priesthood) has denounced abortion as evil because the embryo has life from the very moment of its conception. His Proof? The scriptures! Abhimanyu while still in his mother's womb had learned a certain technique of warfare; but unfortunately his knowledge remained incomplete because his foolish mother fell asleep in the middle of the lecture. He also gave an instance of another child who had mastered Sanskrit while still in the womb by hearing its parents converse.

"I can say from the roof-top—I will never be party to the crime of murder!" vowed the Minister. This attitude is all in a piece with the Hindu attitude towards women. It fits in admirably with Catholic thinking on the same subject.

Women powerless in....

"Anthropologists have noted that the most distinguishing characteristic of a matriarchy is the woman's free disposition over her own body. She may prevent pregnancy or terminate it whenever she wishes," writes Celestine Ward in *Women Power* a report on the Women's Liberation Movement in America. It is interesting to see that in that advanced society women are still fighting for a right to abortion, whereas Indian women have been granted it. However, our right has not been dictated by the enlightened belief that we have a right to control our own fertility. It has been granted out of sheer expediency. So in a negative way the population explosion has proved a boon to women in allowing them control over their own sexual destiny. △

No More Frog's legs

The Prime Minister, Mr. Moraji. Desai, has banned exports of monkeys, birds beef and frog's legs. The announcement was made at the 24th World Vegetarian Congress. A large number of monkeys, birds and frog's legs are eaten as delicacies in many countries.

—Reuter, Madras

(What is Vegetarianism? Is it a mere fad? Can man survive without consuming living objects? What is the effect of uncontrolled growth of birds and animals on food grain production and economics? What is its social impact-caste and religious seclusion?

Readers views are invited.

—Editor)

SECULARISE A. I. R. !

(Following is the text of the Kerala Rationalist Associations letter addressed to A I R in New Delhi and Kerala —Ed)

Sub: Discontinuation of Religious propaganda over A I R—implementation of secularism.

We stand for the high and noble ideals and principles laid down in the constitution of India which should pave the way for the welfare, peace and prosperity of the people. India is a sovereign democratic socialist secular republic. We want to secure to all the citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship equality of status and opportunity and the promotion of fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. But we find on a calm and balanced consideration of all the events and happenings which have taken place in India after we obtained independence, that all the ideals stated above are even now remaining remote. One of the reasons for this sad development is omission on the part of the government to realize among other things the value, purport and significance of the secular ideal. Secularism is also a system of social ethics based on a doctrine that ethical standards and conduct should be determined exclusively with reference to the present life and social well-being without reference to religion. We are much grieved to find that even highly placed people in our country have ignored the precise implications of the word 'secular' and have sought to give definitions which are absolutely unacceptable. It is a common knowledge that all the religions and religious sects of India are vying with one another to perpetuate themselves under the fundamental right to profess, practise and propagate religion, ignoring the broad restrictions imposed on that right. The right to

freedom of religion is subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of Part III of the constitution of India. We are not elaborating these matters but we would respectfully point out that public order, health and morality will become a fact of life only when the people as a whole are able to rise above all narrow, and sectarian approaches. All religions and sects create a narrow approach, so much so that people are even now divided into communal and caste groups; and these function deliberately with a view to make our democratic ideals impossible of attainment.

We consider that it is a primary duty of the Government of India to see that the citizens of India as a whole develop a national spirit as against sectarian spirit. We would at once point out that the media of propaganda under the control of Union Government have the duty to propagate the secular ideals so that they may develop an anti-sectarian, anti-religious, and the

Foresight !

A Dutch court recently passed a suspended sentence upon a man for listing his son as a daughter in the city's birth register in 1970. Asked why he did it, the man told the court that he wanted to keep his son from being drafted into the army when he reached the age of 18.

Courtesy: 'New Times'

anti-communal approach concerning all our programmes and problems. But we find to our extreme regret that ever since India became a republic, the All India Radio which is the most powerful medium of propaganda has been consistently and deliberately used for propagating religious beliefs. In fact, religious broadcasting has been increasing from day to day. The Radio programmes devote much of their time for religious propaganda through bhajans, recitation of hymns from various religious books, speeches by religious leaders, Youth prayer programmes etc. This type of religious propaganda would only foster communal strifes, disintegration, superstitions and backwardness in the minds of the people. We are sure that this is not at all intended by anybody, but all the same, it has been going on uninterruptedly for the last so many years and we now feel it is the fundamental

duty of every citizen to raise his voice of protest against this practice.

Moreover, the All India Radio is a Government agency maintained by the tax-payers' money for which all the citizens of the country, including the non-believers, Atheists, Secularists, Humanists, Rationalists and a host of others who are against religion, too contribute. It is unwise on the part of the Government to spend the money on such items which hurt the sentiments of all those non-believing communities.

As law-abiding citizens, we would like to record our protest in strict accordance with constitutional and legal methods. We propose, as socially conscious citizens of India to observe a 'DHARNA' between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on 4-3-78 before the A.I.R. Stations of Kerala, viz. Trivandrum, Alleppey, Trichur and Kozhikode. It will be observed quite peacefully. This is to be done to see that religious broadcasts are completely stopped.

Prehistoric Flowers

Paleontologists of the Soviet Far East are analyzing the pollen of flowers which grew millions of years ago. The pollen has survived intact in river deposits and silt. It has been discovered, for instance, that in the Quaternary Period chestnuts, peach, hemlock, wingnut grew in what is now the Maritime Territory of the Soviet Union.

The research is of a purely practical nature; the stratigraphic maps drawn up by paleontologists enable geologists to forecast likely areas for mineral prospecting.

Every one in India should have freedom of religion, but the constitution does not anywhere say that the State should propagate religion. At the same time it is said that it is a secular State, and even if, the term "secularism" is to be given a liberal interpretation, it does not justify the government using A.I.R. for promoting anybody's religious faith. On the other hand, it is the bounden duty of the state to propagate the secular ideal to encourage the view of life based on the premise that religions and religious considerations should be ignored or purposely excluded, and see that ethical standards and conduct are determined exclusively, with reference to the present life and that social well-being is promoted without reference to any religion.

Therefore, we request the Government of India to take urgent measures to implement the following demands :

1) Religious propaganda by A.I.R. should be discontinued.

2) A.I.R. broadcasting programmes should help to remove superstitions and evil customs. It should also help to improve rationalistic, scientific and inquisitive nature of human mind

3) Superstition-ridden items such as Bhakthiganangal Udayageetham, religious advertisements etc. should be avoided.

4) Materialist, Rationalist and Scientific programmes should be given the same period of time as is allowed for idealistic and religious programmes.

5) A.I.R. should be utilized for inculcating a mental atmosphere for the creation of a religionless, casteless and classless society.

6) Secularism is to be interpreted in its true perspective.

7) Religion is to be completely separated from the Government and educational institutions from the religion.

8) A.I.R. Advisory Board is to be reconstructed so as to include persons of secular and rationalistic approach.

9) Urgent action should be taken to implement Uniform Civil Code (Art. 44) as a precondition for secularising the national life.

Hoping to hear from you

With kind regards,

1) Director of Programmes, A.I.R.
New Delhi.

2) Directors of Kerala A.I.R. Stations.

Yours Humanly,

General Secretary.

ON THE BOTTOM RUNG

Only 84 of the 4,205 professorships in Britain are held by women. There are only seven women professors in Scotland and just one in Northern Ireland. There is no woman professorship among the engineering faculties of the 44 universities or in the schools of architecture, agriculture, etc. The article on this subject in *The Gurdian* is headlined: "Women stay at Bottom of University Ladder."

OUTRAGED

The world's first fauna, according to an advertisement for Finnair, the Finnish airline, was created by a Finn when he locked his wife in the smokehouse, set it on fire, beat her with birch leaves and discovered that she loved it. Advertisers will think up all sorts of things! But several New York women took it seriously and picketed the airline's office to protest against what they said was the promotion of violence against women.

These Horror Films

By. A. S. Moorthy

'The Exorcist' and 'The Omen' though 'revised' and heavily censored, are box office hits. The films create an eerie sensation and produce creeps on your skin. 'Horror films' have become the mania with US film producers, who claim that "people flock to films to forget their worries about inflation and unemployment".

In the 1960's James Bond films flooded the screens of the world. When the demand for them declined Western cinema Moguls frantically sought for new versions of the same old, tried and tested theme with the spicy addition of more sex and suspense.

STALE SEX

Soon sex and porno became stale. Horror and violence, had taken its place. A lady committing a self abortion with a straightened coat hanger ('The other side of the midnight'); brutal violence and death ('Taxi driver'); the shark decapitating the limbs of the human ('Jaws'); or the beautiful face of the child contorted repulsively cruel-emitting ugly vomit (Exorcist) etc., are the result. The fierce passion to depict on the screen horror and more horror has made the producers search for artificial devices, as in the case of the shark in the 'Jaws' and the huge monster in the 'King Kong'.

BOX OFFICE

What ultimately is the purpose of serving such visual dishes of cruelty, violence and

cynicism? No doubt, these films fetch very good dividends for the producers. "The people like them; we cater to their tastes"—the producers of commercialised culture may say. But is that all that can be said to it? Do they not, with the cleverly concocted myths and the other trappings of recognisable life, aim at producing a narcotic effect that transports the viewer to an illusory world? He becomes a philistine, who, conditioned by this culture, can be more easily side-tracked from the real world of contradictions, sorrows and joys into the dazzling fantasy world of James Bond or can be made to feel an impotent speck before the massive aura of evil spirits and devils.

VICIOUS CIRCLE

The box office cinema moulds its audience in accordance with a set pattern. In turn, this audience dictates quite definite demands. This produces a vicious circle in which the box office film makes the viewer unreceptive to the aesthetic values of real art, dehumanises him, and destroys the feeling of what is beautiful, sublime and noble.

Several years ago, a number of persons were brutally murdered at the home of the film director Roman Polanski, who is prospering in Hollywood making horror films and who recently hit the headlines for raping a 13 year old girl. The victims were his pregnant wife, the actress Sharon Tate and all the guests staying with her at the moment. For more than a year psychologists, philosophers and sociologists as well as police detectives

had been trying to get at the root of this end are they produced? The only answer is: Profits—rich dividends!

PERVERSION YIELDS 'PROFITS'

When the police finally apprehended the criminals, it was discovered that the crime had been engineered by the ring leader of a youth gang, a frustrated artist living in an atmosphere where violence, cruelty and sexual licence were specialised. Crime is inspired by the irresponsible attitude intellectuals adopt to all that is irrational, viewing insanity as a necessary complementary factor in their way of life. Abnormalities in human psychology are cultivated as a fashionable parlour-game.

Many instances can be cited of the perverse behaviour of men and women conditioned by crime and horror films. And the question that arises naturally is: To what

The horror films, which attempt to make you freeze in your seat, in fact evoke only a sense of revulsion and utter disgust. For instance, a scene in the British production of "I, Claudius", it is said, shows the mad emperor Caligula stabbing his pregnant sister plucking the foetus from her womb and eagerly devouring it. This type of mad orgy can only be called vulgar.

CULTIVATE A LOFTY VISION!

Parading ugliness and monstrosities cultivates in the viewer only an illusion of the world's everlasting chaos, an illusion that life is hopeless and man helpless and that this has always been so. It blurs the viewer's vision for the beauteous, the lofty, and the magnific.

Bacteria of 2,800 Million years old

Moscow, (APN): Ukrainian geologists have revealed the traces of bacteria and algae in the rocks which are 2,800 million years old. This has put the time of the origin of life on our planet hundreds of millions of years back.

Samples have been taken in the seams of iron ores of the recently discovered Ananyevskaya Magnetic Anomaly in the south of the Ukraine. They have been studied with the aid of a powerful electron microscope. With a 9,000-fold magnification the traces of the rather intensive vital activity of the colonies of bacteria of those times have been found. They very much resemble similar modern organisms. Threads, fibres and entire clusters of primitive bacteria are discernible on the photos.

Reason—The atlantes of humanity?

By. Datsal

Mankind has been able to progress in an amazing way so very different from other animals, only because the human race is endowed with special faculty of rational thinking, which is devised to all other animals.

TRUE KNOWLEDGE

There are three steps involved in the process of rational thinking. The first is sensation, which is the sensory realisation of external impulses. The second step is perception which is identifying the various sensations and their abstractions into percepts. The third step is conception or the mental integration of percepts into various concepts. In every stage of this calculus of reasoning, the premises are checked and tested for contradictions. The human mind accepts a concept as true knowledge only by making sure that no contradictions exist in the process.

The first two stages in the process of reasoning is common to both animal and man. But it is the third stage, which is unique to the homo-sapien, that makes him great.

MAN-ANIMAL DIFFERENCES

The animal and the human were almost equal at one stage of time. The primitive man was then, still hairy, arboreal, walked with a stumbling gait and ate raw meat. But even then he was exceptional. Both man and animal were, then, naked and both did not

have any language. Both had the identical surroundings to choose their life from. But man was able to make his surroundings adjustable to him, while the animal adjusted itself to its surroundings.

The animal avoided cold by meekly migrating to warmer places. Man learnt to make fire and use it to his advantage. When an animal did not have fangs or talons, it practised vegetarianism. Man, who naturally did not have any sharp fangs or fast legs, used his brain and made sharp instruments out of flint and stone. When animals wanted water, they went to a river. Man built canals and artificial lakes. In every stage of life and its evolution, one can see the animal submitting itself to nature and man trying to control it. The basic difference between man and animal is the defiant spirit of man and the submissive tendency of the animal. Man tried to reason out things only because he was not prepared to submit himself to nature. Man was not prepared to let any power, whether seen or unseen, control him. He never took anything for granted. He defied nature and gained knowledge. Had man submitted himself to nature by simply shifting to warmer places and by starting to eat grass, he would probably still be roaming among dense jungles. But such was not his destiny.

DEFIANT AND CURIOUS

When man saw fire, he did not take it for granted. Not did he avoid it out of fear. Fear was not known to him. He became

curious and by the process of reasoning, he learned to control fire and use it to his advantage. Never in his life was man submissive, nor did he take life for granted. Had he simply taken life for granted, he would today, be only a naked primordial savage living an animal life in dark impenetrable jungles whose rich fobiage even today shelter denizens of such sort. In all man's achievements starting from the simple art of making fire to inter-planetary travel, the motive force remaining invisible behind the screen is his defiant spirit combined with his faculty of reasoning.

If myths were to contain a microscopic element of truth, then mankind is eternally indebted to Eve, the first woman, who defied God by eating the Fruit of knowledge. This basic trait of defiance and unsubmitiveness, is the reason why man reigned supreme in the globe.

REAL TOOL

This continuous employment of reason, the supreme faculty, made man develop communication, language and the art of expanding and passing on the knowledge to future generations. Man did not live by instincts. He did not act on impulses. He reasoned out and planned every action of his in a way advantageous to himself. By this process of systematic collection, compilation, classification and identification of knowledge, man was able to conquer earth.

DEGENERATION

Any reader of this passage, would have observed the continuous employment of past tense to describe man's achievements. It was not a slip or an error. Of late, mankind is showing a marked tendency to revert to the original animal state. Men have started to wish instead of work. Filthy slogans like "Original Sin", "Man's impotence before a creator's omnipotence", "The Karma of previous life", "Absolute submission is the salvation" etc, etc. have started to dominate the philosophical outlook of man. Instead of relying on knowledge derived from reason, men have started to rely on worship derived from faith. They have started to take things for granted. Men now-a-days prefer to choose the opium of religion as a substitute to rea-

lity. It is the outlook of an animal to be submissive and to take things for granted. It is not for man to do so.

HOW TO SAVE THE FUTURE ?

Rationality has become a scarce commodity being drowned in the overflowing filthy gutters of religions. Man, in his quest for infinite knowledge, is at present opting the route of meditation, worship and self abusive submissiveness. What he does not realise (since he has lost his reason and its resultant values of reality) is that to attain that supreme state of complete knowledge, there is only one way—absolute lack of faith and the complete realisation of the truth that reason, like oxygen, is necessary for man to live every minute of his life. Such a rationally purposeful life—and not a pseudo-life of mythical glories and mystic fantasies of a supernatural being to whom the whole mankind is to be submitted in a state of animal degradation—is living. It is high time man started living a life befitting his name and all the glories that go with it. ▷

HELP! HELP! HELP!



Laying the path of civilization is not a joke. We have to clear the stumbling blocks of religion from our way. Please do extend your helping hand in this stupendous and noble task.

America's Villainous Role

in Spreading the Irrational

By

R. Lakshminarayanan

For many of our self-styled Gurus, Swamis, Babas, Maharishis, Astrologers and other spiritual pedlars, having a following abroad, especially in the U.S.A., has a double benefit. Firstly, there is plenty of spare money to be milked there, the per capita Gross National Product of the U.S.A. being 1160 dollars or roughly 8000 rupees per year compared to 100 dollars or about 1000 rupees per year in India.* Secondly, for the Mammon-/Lakshmi-worshipping folk at home, the financial success of these charlatans is confirmation of their claims. The American magazine *Time*, December 12, 1977, reports: "America has been saturated in recent years by tales of the paranormal and claims of pseudo scientists". That there is money in this business is borne out by the advertisements that appear in issue after issue in the Classified Advertisement pages in "Science Digest", a popular science magazine. Here is a sample :

Under SCIENCE AND CHEMISTRY

INVESTIGATE THE AURA with KIRLIAN PHOTOGRAPHY KIT-Now only \$24.95. Complete, postpaid, Guaranteed. Details 25c. Order from PSI (7L8) 580 Commonwealth, Boston 02215.

Under EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

PARAPSYCHOLOGY. Complete Study Course. Certificate Free information.

American Parapsychological Research Foundation. Box 5395-G. Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91413

Under TREASURE FINDERS

TREASURE FINDER locates Buried Gold, Silver, Coins, Treasures. 6 Powerful Models. Instant Financing available. Write or Call for Free Catalog. Dealer Inquiries invited. Phone (713) 682-2728 Day or Night. Relco, Dept. AA24, Box 10839, Houston, Texas 77018

Under PERSONAL

KNOW Yourself. Your Destiny Guide. Simplified Instructions. Number Science Book \$2.00 Christie 1379 Commonwealth Avenue, Brighton, Mass. 02135.

Do you have ESP ? Test \$3, Guaranteed. ESP, A-7, Box 196, Cornwallis, Oregon 97330

NOTED E.S.P. Specialist Prediction expert 3 Questions for \$ 15.00 or 7 for \$ 25.00. Milton Kramer. 9029 Columbus Dr. Bldg. 115-20, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016.

* Figures for 1968. From 'Limits to Growth' by Dennis Meadows (of the famous Club of Rome), Universe Books, New York, 1972

~~BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES~~
~~and the takes the Cake.)~~

PROFITS FROM CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING; Booklet shows you how to run your own business with Classified Advertising. Only \$1.00 (Refundable with first issue). H.E KAPPEL, POPULAR MECHANICS DEPT. P. 224 WEST 57TH STREET NEW YORK N.Y. 10019.

All the above advertisements are from a single issue of SCIENCE DIGEST (July 1975). I was tempted to use a Tamil proverb here by way of comment: Sozhian kudumi summa maa? (Roughly translated: you pay, then do it). Since there is money in this business, vested interests naturally keep belief in these phenomena alive by planting pseudo-scientific articles in newspapers and magazines from time to time. Unfortunately many scientists, claiming to have an "open mind" bend over backwards to give the

benefit of the doubt to the claims of charlatans. And the charlatans thrive on the benefit of the doubt.

"NEW NONSENSE"

A number of intellectuals in America are now worried about the "New Nonsense", as the present wave of irrational beliefs and pseudo-scientific claims has been called. Some 43 scientists, science journalists, educators and magicians have formed a Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. Headed by Paul Kurtz, a philosophy professor at the State University of New York in Buffalo, the committee includes such luminaries as Astronomer Carl Sagan, Psychologist B.F. Skinner, Philosopher Sidney Hook, Author Isaac Asimov. TIME (December 12, 1977) reports: "The group made news last month by filing a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission and two congressional subcommittees against the National Broadcasting Co. for misleading the public about psychic phenomena in an October program, 'Exploring the Unknown.' According to the complaint, the show presented 'a totally biased point of view in a sensationalistic manner arousing gullibility in countless viewers'".

"ASTROLOGICAL CHARLATANS"

It may also be recalled that two years ago 186 well-known scientists in America, including 18 Nobel Prize winners, worried about the rampant spread of astrology, issued a joint-statement condemning the "pretentious claims of astrological charlatans" and denouncing the media for "uncritical dissemination" of horoscopes, charts and the like.

The weakness of American society for the irrational has been noted for a long time. As far back as 1937, Dr. Kovoort T. Behanan,

Australia: S-O-S to God

The drought affecting outback areas of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria has become so serious that Mr. Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, Queensland Premier, has sought the cooperation of all churches in setting aside January 15 as a day of prayer for rain.

"There is no sign of the drought ending," he said. "We are reminded of our dependence on God's blessing for our protection and general well-being."

a cousin of our own Kovoov, wrote in his book 'Yoga: A scientific evaluation': "Although every country has produced its quota (of spiritual mediums), America may claim first place for both quality and number of its mediums." In the preface to the Dover Edition of 1959, he writes: ".....one cannot escape noticing the unduly large proportion of popular literature that is still weighted with wild and unverified claims. That such claims could still appeal to the public is an index of the high degree of emotional maladjustment and a sense of insecurity that characterizes our time".

RAPS HOW PRODUCED

Behanen reports two interesting cases of fraudulent claims. In the middle of the last century two women, named the Fox sisters, kept fooling the American public claiming that they could produce raps at will. Sir William Crooks, an eminent chemist of that time, testified: "With a full knowledge of the numerous theories which have been started, chiefly in America, to explain these sounds, I have tested them in every way that I could devise, until there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences not produced by trickery or mechanical means." After years of cheating the public, when one of the sisters died the other confessed that the raps were indeed produced by cracking the toe-joints, as had been suspected by the sceptics.

LEVITATION

The second case concerns a Signora Eusepio Palladino, an Italian peasant woman, who claimed, she could make a table levitate, that is, rise in the air without touching it. "She too got her share of scientific testimony, gushing tribute, and plain cash." Ultimately her fraud was exposed by alert observers.

URI GELLER

The claims have become in the meanwhile more and more sophisticated accompanied by impressive terminology: telekinesics, transcendental meditation and so on. Uri Geller, the Israeli illusionist, was able to hoodwink top Transistor-Scientists into publishing scientific papers on his paranormal powers in such a reputed scientific journal as 'Nature.' Has anyone heard of Uri Geller lately?

IRRATIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY

In India the Committee by the Bangalore University under the former Vice-Chancellor Dr. H. Narasimhaiah was pooh-poohed by many as a wasteful exercise. The head of the American committee gives the answer to the critics: "There is always the danger that once irrationality grows it will spill over into other areas. There is no guarantee that a society so infected by unreason will be resistant to even the most virulent programs of dangerous ideological sects."

The progress made by the American committee in exposing fraudulent claims will be watched with interest by rationalists all over the world. It is reported that the Committee publishes a twice-yearly magazine called *Zetetic* (Greek for skeptic).

Evaluation

* Dr. Kovoov T. Behanen, *Yoga, A Scientific Evolution*, First published by the Macmillan Company in 1937 Republished by Dover Publications Inc. New York, 1959. A copy is to be found in the Library of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore Chapter IX in the book, on Yoga and psychic research would be of special interest to all rationalists

Heroine of heroin

(A Communication from Faryad
—the organisation of Iranian students
in India)

The rather cool reception that the dictator of Iran, Mohamed Reza Shah Pahlavi, received at the hands of the Indian people has led to the rather low-key visit of another of his henchmen, General Oweisi, who created the para-military force to oppress the Iranian people; and now the Shah's female deputy and one of the original planners of the C.I.A-backed coup d'état of 1953, his twin-sister, princess Ashraf, who generally parades around the world as a representative of Iranian women. It is interesting to note what qualities the Shah of Iran seeks highlight as desirable in Iranian women. Princess Ashraf, a noted drug-trafficker who has been arrested for carrying a suit-case full of Heroin in Switzerland in 1962, has earned herself the title of the "Heroine of the Heroin" in Europe and America. But she is more than that. She is also a leading figure in what is known euphemistically as the 'white slave trade,' and this leading "emancipator" of women in Iran led hundreds of peasant girls to emancipation by having the SAVAK kidnap them and transport them to house of prostitution. Only when this emancipation became a world-wide scandal, the Shah's emancipator of women resorted to more subtle means.

HIGH STAKE GAMBLER

As a socially committed person in a country where women still work at carpet-weaving and tea-plucking for a pittance, this defender of womanhood is known to have lost, 1.1 million dollars in a single night at Monte Carlo in the company of Iran's Finance Minister who showed a rare financial sense in calling a halt to further losses after he himself had managed to lose \$500,000!

This inimitable lady had been nominated by the Shah on the international human rights commission, and it is not from lack of knowledge that she counters accusations of the violation of human rights in Iran by saying: "A developing country has to close its eyes on many things. We have no time at all for human rights". On torture: "I have read in some paper that people think we burn prisoners. I can assure you these stories are 100 percent lies. Anyway, there are more sophisticated ways of getting the truth". In a state where no proper legal defence is permitted: "It's to give them time to prepare their defence." Therefore it is not surprising that not only has Iran topped the world's list of human rights violations, but that the Pahlavi's dynasty is notorious for its barbaric treatment of political opponents.

TORTURE AND RAPE

Barbaric torture, imprisonment without trial, rape and unspeakable atrocities have not been able to cow down the fighting spirit of the Iranian peoples, especially the women. The real representatives of Iranian womanhood, 4000 of them: like Fatemah Saidi, aged 50, arrested in 1973 and tortured as a result of which she suffered paralysis of both her arms at present in Ghasr prison in Tehran; like Vida Hajebi 36, Sociologist at Tehran

University, arrested and tortured for what her studies on the poor revealed in 1972 and still in jail ; like Simin Salekhi, 29, a doctor who was arrested in 1974 and tortured while she was seven months pregnant. And above all, like Manizheh Ashrafzadeh Kermani who was executed in January 1976 when the brutal Iranian dictatorship took the novel step of executing its first woman political prisoners, and like, Shahin Tavakoli, B.Sc., in Chemical Engineering, arrested on 24th March 1971 at the time when her son was a two year old baby. At her phony trial although often interrupted by the presiding judge and the military prosecutor she was able to make herself heard. The following is part of her revelations in Court :

A TALE OF WOE

" At the moment of my arrest, the police tore down my dress and beat me though I had offered no resistance. They kept me naked in public for some time and then took me to the hospital to watch my badly wounded husband in severe suffering and unattended. Later they started their torture sessions in earnest. They knew I was a decent woman with a young child, a suckling baby, but this did not stop four SAVAK thugs named Azadeh, Khatai, Makhfi and Amini headed by an officer called Nik-Tab from stripping me completely naked after binding my hands and feet and gagging my mouth. Nik-Tab who was reeling with drinks would lift his glass after each infliction on me and have a swing. Then all five raped me one after the other. During my stay at the police cell every conceivable humility and brutality was inflicted on me. My hands and feet were usually bound in chains. Now the authorities tell the people that members of O I.P.F G. (an urban guerrilla organisation) are criminals and gangsters. I ask you, members of this Court, are not such police officers the real criminals and gangsters ? Should these criminals and base

agents of this dictatorship be the ones to be tried for their crimes? As a decent human being I desired to live and raise my little boy in a free and decent society. I respected my husband's ideals and loved him dearly. I totally refute the allegation by my so-called Defence Counsel that I was ignorant and unaware and followed my husband blindly. Nay, I believe in the cause of freedom and in the people and their revolutionary struggle. As with any decent human being, I have always coveted service to others and have aimed to bring about the eradication of poverty, ignorance and social injustice. You have demanded the death sentence for me. I refute your charges most resolutely. I warn you that my blood is no less red than that of my husband and my brother. I do not fear death." When the sentence was read to Shahin she calmly exclaimed: " Today I really feel that I have nothing to lose but my chains."

We call upon the Indian women and democratic-minded people to raise their voices against this infamy being perpetrated in the name of women.

" Long live the resistance of Iranian women in Shah's jail." ▷

GOD NEEDS REMINDING

Isaac Asimov, the writer, says this of himself in the Who's Who of America : ' I have been fortunate to be born with a restless brain, with a capacity for clear thought and an ability to put that thought into words. Placing it all at the service of my avidity, have published 164 books as of now, and am well thought of in consequence. As you see, none of this is to my credit. I am the beneficiary of a lucky break in the genetic sweepstakes.'

NEWS AND NOTES

INTER CASTE WEDDING

Mr. P. Krishnaraj married Miss J Sumitra Devi on Sunday 12th March 1978 under the presidentship of Dr. N.D. Sundaravadivelu, former Vice-chancellor of Madras University. The marriage was conducted in the self-respect marriage style. Both the less bride and bride-groom are members of the Inter Marriage Bureau of Indian Rationalist Association and the alliance was fixed up by the Bureau.

* * * *

BOMBAY RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

A public meeting was convened by the Bombay Rationalist Association at Marathi Patrakar Sangh Hall, Bombay, on 2nd February 1978, under the Presidentship of Mr. Kamala Shankar Pandya, President of IRA and the following resolutions were passed:

RSS Infiltration :

" This meeting expresses its grave concern over the subtle and steadfast infiltration of the members of the R.S.S. the notorious parochial organisation, in every section of the state as well as public institutions, including those of press and other public media, as a result whereof persons whose views are not congenial to that parochial organisation, are being sacked under one or the other excuse and their places are filled with the member of the R.S.S. Therefore, this meeting appeals to conscientious intellectuals and youths of the country to raise their timely voice against the disaster that may otherwise develop to destroy the democracy and usher in fascism in the country.

Sarika Ediotrship :

" This meeting vehemently condemns the efforts to dislodge Shri Kumaleshwar from the Editorship of Sarika by R.S.S. elements and entreat the management of Bennet Coleman and Company to desist from such nefarious act.

Maha Yagna:

" This meeting is shocked by the audacity of the organisers of the Maha Yagna at Ahmedabad wherein huge quantities of food-stuffs etc. will be wasted at a time when cyclone-stricken brethren are starving in Andhra and the meeting is equally grieved by the acts of the civic and state authorities either helping it or conniving at it, and therefore the meeting feels that much waste could be stopped only which the conscientious intellectuals and youth organise effective measures to seize those stuffs for distribution to the needy and thereby create public consciousness to deter organisers of such waste in future.

" The meeting is convinced that such tamashas are organised by so-called religious dignitaries to awe inspire gullible people so as to side-track their attention from the burning problems."

* * * *

DELHI RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

The following resolutions were passed at the meeting arranged by Delhi Rationalist Association on 5th March 1978.

1. On the passing away of Mr. S. Ghosh :

" This meeting expresses its heart-felt condolences at the sudden and sad demise on 26th November 1977 of Mr. S. Ghosh founder President of the Association. The Delhi Rationalists pledge to follow the rationalist path illuminated by the brilliance of his example."

2. New Chief Justice of India

" This meeting hereby conveys its hearty congratulations to Mr. Y. V. Chandrachud, the new rationalist Chief Justice of India. The Delhi rationalists gratefully remember the excellent services he had rendered to the cause of rationalism and express the hope that his judicial pronouncements as Chief Justice will continue to reflect his steadfast adherence to rationalism ."

3. Support to KRA on Proposed Dharna :

" This meeting firmly and unequivocally extends its solid support to the proposed Dharna planned to be organised in front of various AIR stations in Kerala by volunteers of KRA against religious propaganda by AIR. This is all the more objectionable as this is being done at public expense and all public are not religious. There are rationalists too,

" This act of the AIR militates against the nation's declared secular policy and the Constitution and sets it at naught. This meeting demands that AIR stations stop carrying religious propaganda in any form in its broadcasts.

* * * *

GUJARAT RATIONALISTS' VICTORIES

Two successful Mass Movements were concluded in Gujarat by Gujarat Rationalist Association under the able guidance of President of IRA M. Kalashankar Pandya.

Mr. Tulsidas who claims to be 'Bhagwan' and is called Bai Jai Gurudev,

had come to Ahmedabad to perform what he called 'Satyug Avan Thirty Three Crores God's Yagna', where he would waste half a crore of Rupees. He stated by 'this 'Yagna' Satyug will be ushered in. Much publicity was given in the Press. It was claimed that, President Carter of USA, President of India, Prime Minister etc. would attend the 'Yangna'. State Machinery, Wealthy Industrialists, Businessmen, Leaders, and the press were at the disposal of this Baba. Municipal corporation spent lacs of Rupees for light, road, etc. Baba came to Ahmedabad under blaze of publicity. When nobody had courage to openly challenge this Thug, at this critical time GRA and Gujarat Arya Samaj openly and jointly protested and challenged the Baba.

An open wall-slogan war started in whole of Ahmedabad. Public meetings were organised, thousands of leaflets and Booklets were distributed. A 'Satyagraha' (Dharana) was staged, huge 'procession' with placards, chanting slogans was taken out and it marched towards the venue of the 'Yagna'. Swami Amrutanandji Saraswati Maharaj of Arya Samaj led the procession, which was converted into a huge public meeting

The electrifying effect of such wide spread campaign was so intense that, people of Ahmedabad boycotted Baba's 'Yagna'. Prime Minister Morarji Desai, though he was in Ahmedabad at that time, did not dare to attend the 'Yagna'. The Baba Yagna ended in a great fiasco. Baba had to publicly admit that people did not co-operate.

No sooner Baba left Gujarat, another challenge was waiting for GRA and Arya Samaj. This time 'Goddess Gayatri Yagna' by two Thugs, Shambhu Maharaj and Streedhar Maharaj. They announced that,

one crore of Rupees would be spent, and thousands of Kilos of wheat, Milk and Ghee would be poured in 'Yagna'.

This time also Government Machinery, Leaders, Industrialists, and the press were at the disposal of these Thug Maharajas. Again GRA and Arya Samaj and other progressive organisations accepted the challenge. Huge demonstrations were staged at the venue of the Yagna. Public Meetings and leaflets distributions, were arranged. Street plays were staged. Prime Minister Morarji Desai openly opposed the 'Yagna'. This Yagna was also a flop, as people boycotted the 'Yagna'. Shankracharya of Dwarka Peet, the President of the 'Yagna', publicly admitted that, people did not co-operate.

Thus, GRA has achieved two important HISTORIC Rationalist Victories. Both the Campaigns were carried out and supervised by GRA workers, M/s Narendra Dave, C. K. Balan, Pravin Rashtrapal and Vinay Kapadia.

* * * *

BENGAL RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Bengal Rationalist Association was held at the Kerala Rashmi office, Mr V. R. Nair presided. Mr. P. T. Poulose presented paper at the meeting. The meeting passed the following resolutions:

"This meeting strongly condemns the brutal behaviour by rowdies at Guruvayoor and strongly protest against the police attitude. We request the Kerala Government to take appropriate action against those concerned.

"The meeting further request all concerned not to waste money for beautify-

APRIL, 1978.

ing Guruvayoor temple but to spend the same for useful and constructive purpose."

2. "The meeting deeply mourn the death of Mr Satish Ghosh one of the founder members of IRA and freedom fighter."

3. "This meeting request Government of India and all state Governments to allow equal time which is being allotted to religions in AIR and other Government media for Rationalist associations also".

* * * *

NEW OFFICE BEARERS OF D.R.A.



MR. P. K. MUKKERJI

At a recent General Body Meeting of Delhi Rationalist Association, the following were elected as the new Office Bearers of the Association for the year 1978-79 :

President : Mr. P. K. Mukherji

Vice President : Mr. Iqbal Krishna

General Secretary : Edamaruku

Joint Secretary : Mr. V. P. Verghese

Other executive Committee Members: } 1. Mr. Devasikutty
2. Mr. S. L. Sharma
3. Mr. Sanal Edamaruku
4. Mr. K. K. Rajendran

Test for Reason No.7

A. Suryanarayana

You must have heard of the device invented by Binkes, for saving people from multi-storeyed buildings during fire accidents. It is a simple form of a pulley system with two huge baskets attached at the two ends of the rope. When one basket is at the top, the other would be at the ground level. When the top one comes down with a load, the bottom one with a lighter weight slowly and simultaneously goes up.

Now, such a device was fitted on a skyscraper which one fine morning caught fire. When almost the entire building including the stair-case and lift caught fire, a family of four members woke up and they wanted to escape at the earliest, using the Binkes' Device fixed near the window. The problem, however, is that if the difference between the loads in the two baskets is more than 30 lbs the top basket would come down so fast that persons carried in it would be badly hurt. They should therefore ensure that the difference is not more than 30 lbs. The weights of the four members are as follows :

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Father : 210 lbs | Mother : 90 lbs |
| Son : 60 lbs | Daughter : 30 lbs |

Can you suggest how fast all the four of them can get out of their room safely?

RULES :

1. The entries should be received on or before 20-4-78.

2. There is a prize of Rs. 10 in the form of books to be sent to the winner. If there are more than one correct entry, the prize will be decided on lots.

3. Readers are requested to quote their Membership or Subscription number.

The following have sent correct solution for "Test for Reason No. 5."

1. Mr. R. Lakshminarayanan, Bangalore.
2. Mr. G. R. Menon, Ahmedabad.
3. Mr. G. Muralikrishna, Eluru.

Mr. R. Lakshminarayanan gets the prize in the lots. —EDITOR

Solution for Test for Reason No 6

From 1 and 2, the guard's neighbour is not Mr. Robinson. From 3, Mr. Jones is not the guard's neighbour. Hence the guard's neighbour is Mr. Smith. From 6 and 1 the guard's name is not Robinson. As shown earlier, the guard's name is not Smith, since Mr. Smith is his neighbour. So, the guard is Jones.

Since Smith beat the fireman in snooker, Smith is not the fireman. Hence the engine driver is Smith.

The following have sent correct solutions for "Test for Reason No.6"

1. Mr. K. K. Kishore Zami Aolivepalli.
2. Miss. P. Meenakumari, Madurai
3. Mr. Nelson Gomej, Cochin
4. Mr. B. Suresh Kumar, Bombay

Mr. B. Suresh Kumar gets the prize in the lots.

NEW MEMBERS

We heartily welcome the following New Members:

| Membership No. | Name | Place |
|----------------|------|-------|
|----------------|------|-------|

Life Members :

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| LM-50 | Ms. Shakuntala Paranjpye, | Poona (Maharashtra) |
| LM-51 | *Dr. E. Rajagopala Reddy, *M.B.,B.S. | Nellore*(A.P.) |

Ordinary Members :

| | | |
|-------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| M-445 | Mr. R. Chandrasekaran, M.Sc. | Madurai (Tamilnadu) |
| M-446 | Mr. M. P. Chandran, M.A. | Madras (Tamilnadu) |
| M-447 | Mr. P. V. Subramanian, B.E. | Madras (Tamilnadu) |
| M-448 | Mr. Rajeev Malhotra | Kanpur (U.P.) |
| M-449 | Mr. G. Sandanam | Baroda (Gujarat) |
| M-450 | Mr. PremKumar M. A., | Bombay (Maharashtra) |
| M-451 | Mr. C. Venkatasubbiah | Anantapur (A.P.) |

Student Members :

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| SM-47 | Mrs. Santhini Thooyamani | Mettupalayam (Tamilnadu) |
| SM-48 | Mr. B N. Mahendra | Madras (Tamilnadu) |
| SM-49 | Mr. J. Lakshman Rao | Adoni (A.P.) |

* converted from ordinary Membership

— General Secretary, I.R.A.

An acknowledgement and an Appeal

We are grateful to the following for their generous donations for FREETHOUGHT etc.

| | Rs. | P. |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Prof. Regis S. Victorien, Pondicherry | ... | 34 00 |
| Mr. S. Selvaganapathy, Madras | ... | 15 00 |
| Mr. P. B. Prasad, Madras | ... | 200 00 |
| Mr. P. V. Prakash, Madras | ... | 10 00 |
| The Humanist, U.S.A. | ... | 24 30 |
| Mr. D. Shanker, Madras | ... | 10 00 |
| A well wisher | ... | 50 00 |
| Donations of less than Rs. 5 each | ... | 2 50 |
| As per February 78 issue | ... | 1,323 70 |
| | 1,669 | 50 |

Other sympathizers of the Rationalist Movement are also requested to help the journal financially.

—Treasurer, I.R.A

X Convention of Indian Rationalists

It is decided to hold the Xth Convention of Indian Rationalists at Palghat on 13th and 14th May 1978. This convention is mainly intended to discuss the organizational problems in the rationalist movement and also to find out ways and means to strengthen the rationalist movement, especially in the northern states, where the movement is just taking shape.

Rationalists, Atheists, Humanists and Secularists from different parts of the country are expected to participate at the convention. Various sessions of the convention will be presided over by eminent veteran rationalists.

Since this will be the first All India Convention of this kind being held in Kerala, which ranks first in the rationalist map of India, it is hoped that all those who are interested in the rationalist movement will make it a point to attend the convention and get benefited from it.

Palghat is almost on the borders between Tamilnadu and Kerala and it is only a couple of kilometres from Olavakot junction on Madras-Cochin/Mangalore Broadgauge line.

For more particulars about the convention and enrolment forms, the General Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association, 28/18, Pantheon Road, Madras 600 008 or the General Secretary, Kerala Rationalist Association, Kadalundi P. O. Kerala 673 302 may please be contacted.

An Important Announcement For New Readers

We have just brought out the complete Volume No. 7 with all the 12 issues of 1977 in Calico Hard Board with a beautiful wrapper.

The volume contains ten interesting special issues on different subjects and two general issues.

Though it contains as many as 304 pages, it is moderately priced at only Rs 12/- so that it would be within the reach of very one.

Since only limited copies have been bound, hurry up to avoid disappointment.

Order for your copy to-day itself with full advance to save V. P. P. charges.

The General Secretary,
Indian Rationalist Association
Madras-600 008.

Freethought

IN THIS VOLUME -

| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| X Convention | General | Anti Dowry |
| APRIL | MAY | JUNE |
| Sex & Marriage | E. B. P. | Astrology |
| JULY | AUGUST | SEPT. NOV. |
| Bible | Bankers | Charya |
| OCTOBER | NONVIOLENCE | Anti Caste |
| Debts | Superstition | DECEMBER |
| | | Annual Number |



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